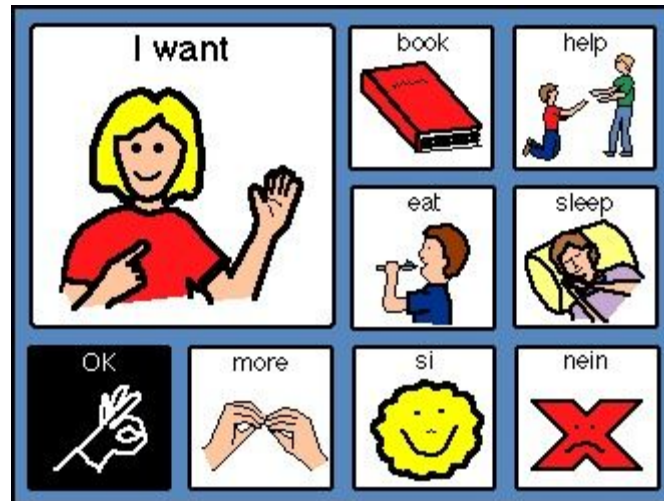


Getting Started with Augmentative Communication at Home

50 IDEAS

(Just remember that all it takes is one!)



2008

50 IDEAS

Getting Started with Augmentative Communication at Home

- 1 Create a Breakfast Menu. Put it on a placemat or on the refrigerator door. Ask your child "should we have cereal or waffles?" while you point to the pictures.
- 2 Put a mirror in the bathtub. Let child choose the type of hairstyle or animal ears you will make out of his shampoo suds, (e.g. dog ears or unicorn).
- 3 Display picture of family members on Velcro or magnets. Have child move them in or out of the "doghouse" picture, (e.g. "Daddy's in trouble now!").
- 4 Draw pictures on a big family calendar. Use it to refer to what will happen, what we already did, (e.g. "today is a church day" or "remember we went to Grandma's?")
- 5 Hide the remote control! Or, just take the batteries out of it and tape on a picture to mean "change the channel" or "I hate news". Have child hand it to someone to change the channel (e.g. "go tell your brother it's Rugrats time").
- 6 Put videotapes out of reach. Make a picture menu of your child's favorites and put it where your child can point to it.

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- 7 Put pictures of a few of your child's favorite clothing items right on the drawer front or closet door. Or, try a favorite and a least favorite. Point to the pictures and ask, "Do you want this one or this one?"
- 8 Make a picture shopping list from coupons. Put your child in charge of reminding you to get the things that are pictured, even if it's one or two at a time.
- 9 Ask for a picture menu at McDonalds. Use it at home with play food. Then have your child order on her own the next time you go.
- 10 Make a picture for "in the trash" and "put it away". Have your child direct you in putting away groceries or clearing the table.
- 11 Make a Lego picture display. Use words that describe what your child does with Lego's: "build a monster", "build a tower", "destroy it", "do it again". Get it out whenever you use the Lego's or blocks. Point to the pictures while you play with your child.
- 12 Make a "washing the baby" display. (Don't forget to get it all wrong when you play it; put the diaper on the baby's head and let the child correct you.)

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- 13 Make a “reading books” display. Let your child direct you to “turn the page” or “say that again”.
- 14 Put an “open” picture on the refrigerator door, or a picture of a few favorites.
- 15 Put pictures of your child’s favorite’s places to go right next to the door, (e.g. swings, stroller, sandbox, or even coat).
- 16 Create a picture menu of the audio tapes your child listens to in the car. (Use the actual cassette box, if you need to.) Let them pick. Keep the menu in the car.
- 17 Put an “unbuckle me” picture on the inside door or the back of the seat in front of your child’s car seat. Pretend to forget to unbuckle. Smile, and pretend to misunderstand the whining that follows (“oh, I thought you just wanted to stay in the car while I shop!”).
- 18 Make a picture display for mealtime (spoon, drink, more, yuck . . .) Then forget to put food on your child’s plate, or forget the spoon.

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- 19 Take Polaroid pictures of classmates. Put them on a page that includes “good”, “bad”, and “sick”. Kids like to report on their friend’s behavior or illnesses. (Don’t expect truth or accuracy here).
- 20 Don’t use the words “point” or “show me”. Always use “Say” and “Tell” when describing use of pictures. (e.g. “I love it when you tell me that.”)
- 21 Keep a photo album of memories that can serve as a “topic setter” for your child (e.g. “Oh, you want to talk about the beach?”). Keep it out where your child can get it and bring it to you.
- 22 Make pictures to stand for each of your child’s favorite songs. Let him pick which one you will sing or play. Stop singing . . . wait for your child to tell you to start again. (How’s your singing? do we need to add a “stop” or “you’re hurting my ears”?)
- 23 Make a phone call board with questions like “can you guess what I’m wearing?” Use a speaker phone to help the child call grandparents.
- 24 Make a “saying prayers’ display. Use pictures of people and pets for the “good night” and “God bless” parts.

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- 25 Make an "I spy" display. Use "I spy something" and some colors to start the game.
- 26 Make an animal sound game. "Make a sound like a . . . "Add "silly" or "scary" as descriptors.
- 27 Make a "do it again" symbol. Make it very bright or fuzzy if it's the only symbol you'll be trying for now. Help your child use it when you are tickling them or
- 28 Tossing them up and down or
- 29 Blowing bubbles or
- 30 Bouncing on their bed or
- 31 Making their spoon fly like an airplane into the hangar or
- 32 Pushing the stroller, wheelchair, or pulling the wagon very fast.
- 33 If you have a child who likes unusual things, let him ask for them. Communication is communication; even if they are picking something you don't see the appeal of.
- 34 Play "Go Fish" with a special game board that helps your child know what to say (e.g. "your turn", "give me", etc.) You can even try to play with a deck of only 3 or 4 pairs.

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- 35 Make a Sesame Street picture board. Use it when Sesame is on, and use it with Sesame books.
- 36 Go ahead; make a Barney picture board (or a Big Bird, Pocahontas, Thomas the Tank Engine, Pinky and the Brain, Looney Tunes, Gullah Gullah Island or whatever shows your child just loves).
- 37 Make a power ranger or some other action characters picture board. This is a great time to practice using action words. If this is a hit, try something else.
- 38 Buy a loop tape from Radio Shack (10-15 seconds). Also ask for a simple switch and a 3/32" adapter. Record "Go, Go, Power Rangers" on the tape. Plug the switch into the remote jack. Let your child push the switch to sing along during the show. Buy earplugs if you have to. Let them repeat that refrain 92 times if they want to.
- 39 Use the same loop tape. Record "E-I-E-I-O" and start singing Old MacDonald.
- 40 Same contraption, different message. Let your child call you from the next room saying "Mommy", or even "Hey You".

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- 41 When using loop tape and switch, always put a picture on the switch. You might try a “voice recording photo frame”, available from Radio Shack (Cat. No. 63-942, for \$19.99) which you can take anywhere. Carry Post-Its and a thick marker with you, and give your child a way to participate in unplanned activities.
- 42 Record “Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See” and sit down with the book. This also works well for “Where’s Spot”, and 3 Little Pigs “I’ll huff and I’ll puff.”
- 43 Make a playing doctor page. Then take it with you to the pediatrician and let your child direct the familiar parts of a checkup (e.g. “open wide”, up on the scale”, etc.).
- 44 Talk with another parent and see what ideas he or she has tried. Believe it or not, you don’t have the only child who doesn’t seem motivated by typical things!
- 45 Don’t worry too much about the pictures. As long as the child is pairing the picture with a motivating event, it doesn’t matter if the picture is fancy. You can also use a meaningful object or piece of a larger object (e.g. a cup, a piece of blanket) if your child doesn’t seem interested in the pictures.

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- 46 Err on the side of small pictures. Make them bigger only if your child can’t handle them (and this may surprise you, but don’t use 5x7 pictures if 2x2 will do).
- 47 Stick with black and white pictures if possible, using color to highlight the important features that make the picture distinguishable from other choices.
- 48 Put pictures on Velcro and let your child hand them to you, then replace it. This sometimes helps to get kids to interact with someone, if they are not likely to initiate on their own.
- 49 If your child can use one picture, they can use one picture in ten different situations! (As long as you pick 10 of the right ones for you and your child.)
- 50 What are you waiting for? Get your child’s team together and share your ideas. Together, all of you can accomplish more than anyone can alone!

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